



# NEWS

*from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

October 9, 1998

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## SERVICE APPROVES TWO TUNGSTEN SHOTS FOR 1998-99 WATERFOWL SEASON

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has given temporary approval for the use of tungsten-iron shot and tungsten-polymer shot during the 1998-99 waterfowl hunting season. The Service's decision is based on preliminary tests that show no harm to birds that ingest the pellets.

In 1991, lead shot was phased out for use in waterfowl hunting because it was found to be toxic to ducks and geese that ingest it while feeding. At that time, steel shot became the only legal load for waterfowl hunting. With this decision, waterfowlers have a choice of four types of shot--steel, bismuth-tin, tungsten-iron, and tungsten-polymer--for the 1998-99 season.

The use of tungsten-iron as non-toxic shot was temporarily approved for use during the 1997-98 season. The decision to extend the temporary approval for the 1998-99 season poses little risk to the resource and would provide Federal Cartridge Company the time needed to complete the full range of tests on the shot material.

The new shot material, tungsten-polymer, was submitted for Service approval by Federal Cartridge this year. While results of the 30-day toxicity tests on both shots suggest that these materials pose little threat to waterfowl through ingestion, additional testing will be conducted before permanent approval will be granted by the Service.

As with last year's temporary approval of tungsten-iron shot, the Service did not approve the use of either shot in Alaska's Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta because of concern that the absorption of tungsten into the femur, kidney, and liver could potentially affect the threatened spectacled eider, a species already subject to adverse weather, predation, and lead poisoning.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 93-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of more than 500 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands, and other special management areas. It also operates 66 national fish hatcheries and 78 ecological services field stations.

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# Fish and Wildlife Service

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**Fish and Wildlife Service**

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For release

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